

Omnia Vincit Amor

by Hel83

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Omnia Vincit Amor

>'Omnia Vincit Amor' (or 'Love Conquers All')<br>BY: Helen

>FEEDBACK: of course! E-mail me at: [helenliz@supanet.com](mailto:helenliz@supanet.com)

<br>DISTRIBUTION: yeah, if you let me know first

>RATING: PG? Nothing worse than the show<br>SPOILER: none really, except maybe 'Rm w/a vu' and 'Heroes'. Maybe not so much 'Rm w/a vu'...

>DISCLAIMER: okay, if I owned any of the characters, I wouldn't be doing this! They belong to Joss Whedon and Mutant Enemy and any others that I forgot to mention. No infringement is intended, and I ain't making any money from this.<br>SUMMARY: Cordelia is in trouble, but Angel only finds out when it's too late...

>AUTHOR'S NOTE: okay, this is my first 'ANGEL' fic, so be gentle with feedback! For those wondering about the title, it is Latin for 'Love Conquers All'. I saw it one day and thought that it would be a great name for a fanfiction one day...<br>

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>In the shadows of the large apartment complex, the figure moved, stealthily following its prey. The gentle April rain fell soft on the figure's overcoat, almost melting into the fabric. His eyes glowed red in the darkness as he watched the young woman dash up the stone steps towards her apartment. Her wet hair clung to her face and her running clothes stuck to her slight frame. He watched as she awkwardly jammed the key in the lock, longing to sneak up behind her and take her to the abyss. <br>

>But he knew he had to bide his time. Haste only created more problems, and that was all he needed at the moment. He had planned the abduction for so long that it wasn't worth ruining it all on a whim. <br>

>Watching as the woman retreated into the safe comfort of her

apartment, the demon smiled, two sharp fangs slipping down from his gums. He could feel his stomach rumbling with hunger, and with one last, almost sad, glance at the apartment, he made his way back to where he came from. Back to the Hellmouth.<br>

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>Pulling the sopping wet clothes from her clammy skin, Cordelia moved from the bedroom to the bathroom of her modern LA apartment. Puddles of rainwater made the floor slippery, and she cursed as she nearly collided with Dennis as he carried a mop and bucket towards the front door.<br>

>"Jeez, Dennis. Walk into me, why not?" she said bitterly, instantly regretting it. As the weeks went on, and Doyle's death became a constant reminder of how stupid she had been towards the half-demon, she had found herself snapping at the least little thing. Doyle had loved her, but he had let her know too late. Now he was gone; disintegrated by a giant demon killer. Never to return.<br>

>Turning in the general direction of the mop and bucket, Cordelia brushed a wet clump of hair from her eyes. "Dennis, I'm sorry," she said as the mop began to soak up the puddles. "I guess I'm just a little tense lately. I didn't mean to snap." <br>

>The mop moved closer and Cordelia felt a gentle swish in the air as Dennis moved beside her. She was sure she felt an icy touch guiding her to the sofa, wrapping her in a warm towel, but she couldn't be sure. A box of tissues spontaneously moved beside her as they usually did when Cordelia poured her heart out to the phantom.<br>

>"I guess I just miss him," she said resignedly. She had said those same words a hundred times over, but for the first time, she felt as though she really meant it. "I hardly got to know him. That's all I ask for. If I could have him back for just one day, I would ask for it to be on the terms that we get to know each other better. As friends." She felt the familiar sting of tears in the corners of her eyes. "But you and I know that that will never happen." <br>

>Letting the salty tears slip down her soft cheeks, Cordelia grabbed a tissue as it floated towards her. <br>

>"I told myself that one month was enough. One month of sitting around and crying. I know it isn't good for me, and it isn't good for Angel, either. I know that he worries about me. I don't want him to. But the truth is, I worry about him too." Balling the tissue up in her hand, Cordelia stood up and shrugged the damp towel away from her shoulders. "Dennis, mark the occasion," she said, putting her hands on her hips. "Cordelia Chase is back."<br>

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>Across town, Angel sat in the darkness of his basement apartment. A bottle of unopened whiskey and a shot glass sat on the far end of the table. He had placed them there out of habit. Every afternoon before the sunset, he would get a bottle of whiskey out from under the sink and a glass from the shelf and set them down for when the service elevator clicked and whirled into life and Doyle sunk into the bowels of the building. It had been over a month since Doyle had died; yet every evening he would be sat as he was at that very moment, his ears pricked at the slightest sound. It had become a sacred ritual.<br>

>The familiar sound of the service elevator moving at an unusual time startled him, and he looked up, half expecting to see his demon friend. When Wesley Wyndham-Price stepped out of the elevator, he lifted himself out of the chair and began to clean away the whiskey and glass. <br>

>"Angel," Wesley greeted. "Anything the matter?" <br>

>Angel turned to see him eyeing up the bottle and glass. "No, Wesley," he sighed. "Just a spot of cleaning, is all." He dropped the bottle into the trashcan and closed the lid with a regretful glance. Now nearly everything of Doyle's was gone. <br>

>"Well, if I may--?" He pointed to one of the dining chairs and sat down when Angel nodded. "I just got this very interesting book from a store downtown. I thought there might be some things in here that might interest you." He slid an old, leather-bound volume across the table. "I took the trouble to bookmark page two hundred and twenty-five." <br>

>Angle turned to the folded piece of paper and looked at the curled, yellow page. "A love spell?" he asked, looking through the ingredients.<br>

>"The other page," Wesley replied, pointing. "It's a reincarnation spell."<br>

>Angel shook his head. "I don't understand," he said. Then suddenly, he did. "Doyle," he whispered. <br>

>"Precisely," Wesley said with a smile. <br>

>"But why?" Angel breathed.<br>

>Wesley shrugged. "I've seen how his death is an avoided subject around here. At the mere mention of his name, Cordelia breaks down in tears and you lock yourself away down here." He averted his eyes from the vampires. "And I know I'll never replace his presence. I can't help you in battle like he did." He looked up again, and with a dignified air, he said, "Besides, a Rogue Demon Hunter can't afford to stay in one place for too long."<br>

>Angel looked down at the spell again, then at Wesley. "Thank you," he said. "For understanding." <br>

>Wesley smiled a knowing smile. "Well, if you'll excuse me. I'll carry out my duties until you get Doyle back, of course. But right now, I have another duty to attend to. Good Luck." With one last glance, Wesley climbed out of the chair and made his way back to the service elevator and out into the night.<br>

>Angel looked down at the ingredients. Nothing too complicated. Just a matter of reciting the passage and inserting Doyle's name at the appropriate parts. A breeze. He hoped.<br>

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>The next morning was bright and dry after the previous night's downfall. The typical LA traffic picked up and the constant fog that seemed to cover the city reappeared. <br>

>In the safe shadow of an elm, the demon's eyes glowed red as he watched the brunette jog down the steps of the apartment block. Her hair glistened in the sunlight as she raced across the busy road in a break in the traffic and slowed her pace to a quick dash as she headed to wherever she went every day.<br>

>The desire to take her to the Underworld was overpowering. His senses were heightened, and he had to do all he could to stop him leaping after her and sweeping her up. Still, he watched her as she rounded a corner and disappeared. <br>

>Soon, he thought to himself. Very soon.<br>

>With a last glance around, the demon leaped onto the wall that surrounded the apartment building and made his way to the apartment the young woman had just come out of.<br>

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>When Cordelia bound into the office, there was no sign of Angel or Wesley. Calling Angel's name, she made her way to the coffee machine and switched it on. Checking the mail envelopes on her desk she realised that either Angel or Wesley must have been there already. Dropping her bag on her desk, she made her way to the service elevator.<br>

>As she rode the short way into the basement, Cordelia flicked through the envelopes she had picked up. Bill; bill; bill; final reminder; oh, cheque.<br>

>Still looking through the mail, Cordelia made her way through the dark apartment and into the kitchen.<br>

>"Angel," she called, opening the final reminder. "Wesley?"<br>

>Looking up, Cordelia stopped short at the kitchen table. The smell of dried rosemary and thyme stung her nostrils as she carefully set the mail down on the corner of the table, looking at the objects set out before her. A small jar of some glowing gelatinous substance, a large leather-bound book, a thin, sharp dagger and a plate. Puzzled, Cordelia looked at the bookmarked page. <br>

>"A love spell?" she asked herself, studying the ingredients. Realising that the ingredients that lay before her didn't match the ones in the book, she looked at the other page. And saw a reincarnation spell of some sorts.<br>

>"Doyle," she whispered as the sound of metal grinding shut came from the other side of the apartment. Angel.<br>

>The footsteps behind her faltered. "Cordy--."<br>

>"Why didn't you tell me?" she breathed, her hands toying with the edge of the book.<br>

>Angel moved closer, the swish of his heavy duster cutting through the placid air.<br>

>"I--," he began.<br>

>Cordelia could feel Angel's breath on the back of her neck. It was an odd feeling; as cold as ice yet as hot as fire. <br>

>"Don't," she whispered, putting distance between herself and him but still keeping her back towards him. "Don't try to explain. For the past month I have mourned for Doyle. I have put my life on hold while I tried to figure out what to do."<br>

>She whirled around to face Angel, anger clouding her eyes.<br>

>"But today was going to be different," she continued. "Today was the day when I was going to stop going to his apartment in some desperate hope that he would be there. Today I was going to stop watching the videotape over and over. Today I was going to try and accept Wesley, to try and stop crying, to let Doyle rest in the peace he deserves."<br>

>Cordelia breathed, blinking back salty tears. Calmly, she said: "But you blew all that, didn't you?" A tear traced her cheek and she made no attempt to wipe it away.<br>

>Angel was unsure of what to say. He had no idea she felt this way. He was so consumed in his own guilt and sorrow that he forgot to think about how Cordy might have been feeling.<br>

>"You know what? You can do this on your own. I'm getting out of here." She brushed past Angel and almost ran into Wesley as he came out of the elevator.<br>

>"Cordelia!" he began as she stepped into the elevator. He watched until it was gone and then turned to Angel.<br>

>"Is everything alright? Cordelia seemed a little upset." When the vampire didn't answer, he looked past him to the array on the table. "Oh," he said quietly. <br>

>Angel began to gather up the ingredients. "Maybe this wasn't such a good idea," he said as he picked up the jar and tossed it between his hands. Then, in a sudden outburst, he flung it at the adjacent wall. Glass shattered and the gelatinous substance scorched the floor where it landed.<br>

>"Angel," Wesley said softly. "Doyle's death wasn't your fault."<br>

>Angel shook his head, laughing slightly to himself. "Yes," he said, looking Wesley directly in the eye. "Yes, it was."<br>

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>The man stood in front of a giant marble archway. Although he couldn't tell if he was outside or in, he could feel the calm, salty air on his face and it reminded him of home. Wherever that had been.<br>

>Stepping towards the archway, a sudden realisation dawned in him. He had been plucked from the icy warmth of limbo and brought before the Powers That Be. Stopping, he looked around. It was nothing like he had expected. It was peaceful. Calming.<br>

>A voice from the archway brought his gaze forward. <br>

>"So we meet at last," a calming, woman's voice said. "I had hoped that it would be on more pleasant terms."<br>

>Alan Francis Doyle studied the woman's face, which seemed to glow silver in the light. <br>

>"What do you mean?" Doyle asked in confusion as a man joined them.<br>

>"Well," the male oracle began. "Your friend Angel came to see us when you were first brought here, pleading with us to give you back your life and now--."<br>

>"And now we shall return you." the woman interjected. "But," she continued. "There is a condition."<br>

>Doyle thought for a moment. If it meant that he got to spend the rest of his life on earth with Cordelia, then he would do it.

Whatever it was. "I'll do it," he said without hesitation.<br>

>The man laughed softly to himself. It surprised him that this demon before him would give up the life he had here for love. It wasn't often he came upon such a thing.<br>

>"The condition is this," the woman continued, ignoring her partner's interruption. "You get your life back on earth if you can prove to us that you are of some...use to your friends. You will help that girl friend of yours. Cordelia."<br>

>Panic rose inside Doyle. "What? What's happened to Cordy."<br>

>The male oracle smiled. "She's in danger."<br>

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>After walking through the bustling metropolis, Cordelia made her way solemnly to her apartment building. Dark clouds covered the sun, threatening another downpour. <br>

>Carrying the lone store bag up to her apartment, Cordelia was unaware of the demon on the street below. Watching. Waiting for the right time. He was becoming increasingly impatient. The hunger he felt inside of him was escalating out of control.<br>

>It was time.<br>

>Taking slow, deliberate steps up to the apartment the young woman had vanished into, he planned his movements carefully. All he needed was to get caught, after the many weeks of effort he had put into tracking her. <br>

>Stopping outside the door, the demon smiled, his lips giving way to sharp fangs.<br>

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>Inside the comforting warmth of her apartment, Cordelia set about tidying up. Usually it was the phantom Dennis's job to keep the apartment tidy whilst she was working at 'Angel Investigations', but lately she had took it upon herself to re-tidy her home every evening. She knew that if she sat around doing nothing she would begin to remember the past. Begin to remember Doyle. And that was the last thing she needed.<br>

>As she dusted over the dining room table, Cordelia started at a

noise coming from within her apartment. It obviously puzzled Dennis too, as the chair he had been sat on edged back with a squeak over the tiled floor. <br>

>"Hello?" Cordelia called out. "Is anyone there?" Well, duh, Cordelia, she thought. If someone was there they aren't exactly going to answer you are they?<br>

>Moving slowly through the living room and towards her bedroom, Cordelia picked up the nearest thing that would serve as a weapon. A crystal vase. Looking at the object, Cordelia had second thoughts. It would be better to go in weaponless than break the vase that had cost her two weeks pay. The vase was swept from her grasp and replaced with a wooden stake. <br>

>"Thanks, Dennis," she mumbled, looking at the small piece of wood. It was more of a cocktail stick than a stake. "Perhaps I could use something a little more...deadly to someone other than a vampire," she said as the stake was flung across the room and in its place was a sharp kitchen knife.<br>

>"Better," she said, looking the knife over. Then, as if suddenly remembering the reason why she needed a weapon in the first place, Cordelia headed towards the bedroom, where the shatter of glass and the splinter of wood could be heard. <br>

>Edging towards the door, the cordless phone floated over to Cordelia. She grabbed hold of it and dialled the number for 'Angel Investigations'. Wesley answered as she reached out for the doorknob.<br>

>"Wesley?" she said, her voice barely a whisper. "I think there might be someone in my apartment." Twisting the doorknob, she went against the advice that Wesley was babbling on the other end. Carefully stepping in her bedroom, she looked around.<br>

>"What the...", she began, looking around her room. Even though she had heard the sounds of utter destruction, everything in the room was in order. No cracked windows or splintered furniture. It didn't make sense.<br>

>"No, it's alright," Cordelia said as she moved closer into the room. "I guess I just..." She stopped when she heard something in the corner of the room where the shadows lay. "Wesley?" she said as the demon raised itself to its full six foot seven height and came slowly towards her. "HELP!" <br>

>Dropping the phone and the knife, Cordelia dashed to the door, which slammed shut as she reached it. Pulling on the doorknob, she tried to open the door, but it was stuck. Glancing behind her, she saw that the monster was moving closer. Its eyes gleamed and sharp fangs slid from his yellow gums. <br>

>Beating her fists on the door, Cordelia tried her hardest to splinter the thin wood. She could feel the strength being sucked out of her, could hear the desperate voice of Wesley as she sunk to the floor, tears streaming down her face. <br>

>As the demon moved closer, she could feel the black wave of unconsciousness sweep over her.<br>

>With every last ounce of strength inside her, she whispered:

"Doyle."<br>

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>"Cordelia?" Wesley shouted into the phone. He could hear screaming and crying on the other end. If only he could get her to hear him.

"Cordelia! Answer me, please. You have to get out of there. I'm on my--." He stopped when he realised the phone had gone dead. <br>

>"Way," he continued in a whisper as he listened to the hum of the dial tone. Then, as if something had grabbed hold of him and shook him, he dropped the telephone and dashed towards the service

elevator.<br>

><br>Down in the dark basement apartment, Angel glanced up as the elevator descended. He put the book he had been glancing through down and stood. Wesley's desperate face told him that something was wrong.

><br>"It's Cordelia," the Englishman breathed, catching his breath. "She's in danger."

><br>Already, Angel was moving swiftly around his apartment, collecting weapons.

><br>"Is the sun out?" he asked, arming a small crossbow.

><br>Wesley thought for a moment before answering. "No, it's raining."

><br>"Good," Angel said, tossing a dagger to his partner. "We'll take my car."

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><br>The streets of LA were busy with late afternoon traffic. Angel weaved in and out of parked cars, depressing the horn on the steering wheel. Trying to get through before anything happened to Cordelia.

><br>Wesley clung to the dashboard as the vampire rounded the corner, narrowly missing a beat-up stationwagon. Ignoring the shouts and curses of the burley man behind the wheel, Angel pulled up outside Cordelia's apartment complex, out of the car before the engine had time to tick off. Wesley followed close behind, dagger grasped in his hand. He mirrored his partner's movements as they hopped up the steps to the open door of Cordelia's apartment.

><br>Stopping, Angel peered in. The place was a scene of mass destruction. The sofa had been tossed over, the CD collection by the stereo was scattered over the floor, and a crystal vase lay shattered by the bedroom door.

><br>"In here," Angel told Wesley as he moved into the bedroom. The sheets on the bed had been tossed back, spots of blood drying on the throw. The closet door had splintered and clothes had been tossed over the floor. The bedside lamp had been pulled from its socket, and streaks of blood covered the lead.

><br>"Oh, God," came a small voice beside him. Wesley moved closer to Angel, his eyes wide in horror. He felt a breeze to his left and shifted into a fighting stance.

><br>Angel moved over to the bed, inspecting the blood. "Dennis, what happened here?"

><br>Wesley looked around, expecting to see someone stood behind him. Then he remembered that he couldn't see Dennis. That was the dead.

><br>He watched as a piece of paper flew over to Angel's side.

><br>"Shadow demon," he read as Wesley moved closer. "Shadow demon? I thought they were extinct since the thirteenth century," he mused.

><br>"They are," Wesley replied, looking under the bed for any evidence. "Or at least, they were. That book I gave you, the spell book? There's a spell in there to revive an extinct demon if there is cause. But it can't have been that. I got the book from a store downtown." He stopped as if realisation had dawned on him. "But he did say that it belonged to some sorcerer who was in search for something. Don't remember what."

><br>Angel was already heading to the door. "Looks like we have to pay this store keeper a visit," he said taking a final glance around the room. Then he headed to the door, Wesley hot on his heels.

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><br>'The Sorcerers Box' was a small store down one of the dark alleyways in the heart of LA. Most of the residents didn't know that it existed, but those who did tried to keep away from it, unless it was necessary for them to go in.

><br>Angel pulled up on the street in front of the alley and jumped out of the car. A green light cast its glow down the alley from the store as he and Wesley moved cautiously into the shadows.

><br>Pushing open the heavy oak door, Angel stepped into the store followed closely by Wesley.

><br>"Can I help you?" a voice boomed from behind a screen. A short, fat man emerged, carrying a pile of books. He took one look at Wesley and put the books down on the counter. "Oh, it's you again," he said with slight distaste.

><br>"That book you sold my friend here," Angel said, moving closer to the counter. "Who did you get it from?"

><br>The man lifted his chin in the air. "I'm not inclined to hand out that sort of information, I'm afraid," he said, crossing his arms in front of him.

><br>Angel laughed and shook his head. He looked down at his feet, and when he looked back up at the man, his face had morphed into 'vamp mode'.

><br>"See, I don't think that was the answer you wanted to give me," he said, making his way slowly around the counter.

><br>The man swallowed. "Oh, well why didn't you say you were one of them," he said, reaching for a file under the counter. "I keep a record of all 'contributions' that I get in case of an emergency." He began to flip through papers, pulling out one that was slightly yellowed. "Here we go. The book belonged to a--!" He stopped short as Angel snatched the paper from his hands.

><br>"Or you can just look for yourself," he mumbled.

><br>Angel's eyes skimmed the paper. Wesley moved to look over his shoulder. "Unit three, Holding's holding house," Wesley read as Angel moved to the door, paper in hand.

><br>"Hey! You can't keep that!" the storekeeper said as the door slammed closed.

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><br>When he woke up, it took Doyle a moment to realise where he was. Then he realised that he was at the dock, and the evening rain was soaking through his thin shirt.

><br>Then it dawned on him. He could feel the rain. He was cold. That only meant one thing. He was alive.

><br>He laughed to himself, checking for broken bones or scratches.

><br>A shrill scream made him look up.

><br>"Cordelia!" he said as he began to run in the general direction of the scream. His bare feet slapped against the wet tarmac as he ran towards a large unit that made up the holding yard. Another scream ripped through the air, and he stopped outside the door to his left.

><br>Pushing back the rough wood door, Doyle peered cautiously around the corner. In the far end of the unit there was a pale blue light emitting from a screened off area. Another scream told him that it housed Cordelia, and he swiftly ran over to the screen. The sound of electricity buzzing filled the air, which was thick with static. He cursed as the static stung the side of his face, electrocuting him slightly.

><br>

>Behind the screen, Cordelia was tied up with frayed ropes. A large



bulb-shaped object hung from a rope above her, swinging closer and closer to her head like a pendulum. One false move and she would be fried. Her hair clung damp to the side of her face, and she tried desperately to shake it from her eyes. She was aware of the figure watching, laughing, in the corner, but the shadows were too dark for her to make out contours. <br>

>"My people have waited many centuries to be brought back to this world. To rule it for eternity. They will be satisfied with this sacrifice," the demon said, moving slightly into the light.<br>

>"But why me," Cordelia gasped. <br>

>The demon laughed to himself. "You have lost someone recently. Your heart is in pain. You will make a tasty sacrifice to the god of my people." <br>

>Cordelia swallowed the nausea rising in her stomach. As she opened her mouth to speak, the screen that surrounded her shattered and she cried out as a shard of glass sliced the side of her face. She looked up to see another demon enter the surround, blue spikes covering its face. A bracken demon.<br>

>"Doyle," she whispered, trying to work her hands free from the rope. <br>

>Doyle glanced over at her as he pummelled the shadow demon's face. Noticing the giant lightbulb, he knew what he had to do. Kicking the demon, he tried to get him close to the light.<br>

>"Oh no you don't," the demon said, pushing Doyle back.<br>

>Doyle stumbled and looked his opponent in the eyes. "You don't seem to realise that I have a bad history with bright lights." <br>

>Then with a grunt, he launched himself at the demon, throwing him over his shoulder and into the light. It flashed, emitting smoke as the demon burnt, before blinking out and disappearing. <br>

>Doyle ran over to Cordelia taking her into an embrace.<br>

>"Shh," he said soothingly, his face morphing back to normal. He held her shoulders firmly as breathless sobs racked her body. Brushing back her hair, Doyle kissed her softly on the forehead. <br>

>"It's all over now, Princess."<br>

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>Battling evening traffic, Angel weaved his car in and out of traffic, running red lights as he made his way across the seemingly endless city towards the dock. Wesley was studying the paper from the store, trying to find the date on which the store received the book. Twenty-fourth of August 1613. <br>

>"My God," he said, holding onto the dashboard as Angel swerved around the corner onto the dock front. "A sacrifice!"<br>

>Angel glanced at his partner for a brief second before turning back to the road. "What?" he asked, puzzled.<br>

>The shadow demon's using Cordelia as a sacrifice to try and resurrect his people. Why didn't I think of it earlier?!"<br>

>Angel pulled up outside unit three and was heading towards the door when a familiar voice held him back.<br>

>"Angel."<br>

>Glancing over towards the pier, Angel saw Doyle holding a sleeping Cordelia in his arms.<br>

>"Doyle," he replied softly, moving to crouch down beside his friend. "Is she alright?" <br>

>Doyle shrugged, stroking Cordelia's hair gently. "She said her chest hurt. Probably from where she was tied up. But other than that, I think she'll be okay."<br>

>He lifted Cordelia up and headed to the car. "You should have seen

it, man," he said, gently placing Cordelia down. She whimpered and stirred, but didn't wake up. "It was like the scourge's detonator. Only not as harmful. They were going to use her as a sacrifice. The light thing was just a portal into their world. Only it nearly killed Cordy."<br>

>Angel placed a friendly hand on his returned friend. "You saved her life," he said, smiling. "You're her hero."<br>

>Doyle looked up and laughed sadly. "If I was her hero, this wouldn't have happened in the first place." He climbed in the back seat beside Cordelia, scooping her into his arms, wrapping the beach blanket he found around them both. <br>

>Wesley moved to Angel's side. "He really loves her, doesn't he," he stated as Doyle fell asleep beside Cordelia. <br>

>Angel nodded. "Yeah, he really does."<br>

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>In the peace and warmth of Angel's apartment, Cordelia slept fitfully in his bed. Doyle kept watch, not daring to leave her alone in fear that he would never see her again. He held a shot of whiskey in his hand, his other tapping the bedside table gently. He had to do something with his hands to stop them grabbing hold of Cordy and never letting go.<br>

>As he took another sip of whiskey, Angel walked in. <br>

>"How is she?" he asked, sitting down on the floor next to his friend. <br>

>Doyle shrugged. "A couple of bruised ribs, a few nightmares, some nasty scratches, but I think that's it." He took another sip of whiskey and handed it to Angel, who held it, staring at the dark amber liquid.<br>

>"How did you manage to come back?" he asked, taking a sip of the whiskey.<br>

>"The PTB told me that if I saved Cordy then they would let me stay on Earth. They would be satisfied that I really was needed here." He took the glass back from Angel and took a long sip. "Guess they're happy enough now."<br>

>Angel nodded. "Guess they are."<br>

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>One week later<br>

>Wincing as she made her way into the offices of 'Angel Investigations', Cordelia reached out for Doyle's hand. To make sure he was still there.<br>

>"I'm still here," Doyle said, as if understanding the reason for the hand that grabbed his. "I'm not going anywhere."<br>

>He pushed open the glass fronted door and stepped into the dark office behind Cordy, a guiding hand on the base of her back. <br>

>"Angel?" he called, moving to Cordelia's side. "Hey, man? You here?"<br>

>A figure stepped out of the shadows and Cordelia reached out for Doyle's hand, squeezing it. <br>

>Wesley's face came into view in the moonlight. "Ahh, Cordelia." Noticing Doyle, he said: "Doyle."<br>

>"Wesley," the Irishman replied.<br>

>"Angel's up on the roof if you're looking for him," Wesley said, eyeing Doyle cautiously. He still didn't trust the demon completely.<br>

>"Just let me go up and see him for a moment," Cordelia whispered, already heading to the roof. <br>

>"Sure," Doyle replied, watching her as she left. Then he turned back to face Wesley.<br>

>Shifting uncomfortably, Doyle smiled. Wesley smiled back.<br>

><br>Up on the roof, Angel stared out at the moon and the stars. It was a clear night for once, and he took it as a sign that things were going to get better.

><br>Hearing footsteps behind him, Angel turned to see Cordelia coming towards him. She wrapped her arms around herself to keep warm as she approached.

><br>"Hi," she said with a smile.

><br>"Hi," Angel replied, mirroring her smile.

><br>"I just came up to thank you. For all you did." She paused, looking at her shoes. "And I guess I'm sorry for flying off the handle about the, y'know, spell." She looked up at the stars overhead.

><br>"I should have told you," Angel argued.

><br>Cordelia looked at him, a smile creeping onto her face. "Well, yeah, you should have, but there's nothing we can do about that now." She looked out onto the horizon where thick clouds covered the sky and laughed.

><br>"What?" Angel asked, following her gaze.

><br>"Looks like Sunnydale's having all the fun again," she replied, pointing to the clouds.

><br>"How do you know it's Sunnydale?" Angel asked, puzzled.

><br>Cordelia laughed lightly. "Because you can never see the stars in Sunnydale when evil's about."

><br>Angel laughed, momentarily thinking about Buffy. About the demons and vampires that she might be fighting.

><br>"Yeah, I guess you're right there."

><br>

>Back downstairs, Doyle was perched awkwardly on the edge of Cordelia's desk. Wesley was stood by the window. The air was so still that a knife could have sliced through it.<br>

>"So," Wesley said, hands in his pockets. "You're back."<br>

>Doyle nodded. "Guess I am." He laughed awkwardly. "Guess you can't get rid of me that easily."<br>

>Wesley didn't return the laugh. "On the contrary, I was the one who suggested that Angel tried to bring you back."<br>

>Doyle swallowed. "Oh," he said. Then he stood. "I think I'll go see what's keeping Cordy." He was out of the door before Wesley could argue against it.<br>

><br>Stepping onto the roof, Doyle made his way towards the figures of Angel and Cordelia. Silently he slipped behind Cordy, wrapping his arms around her waist. She jumped slightly and turned around to face him.

><br>"Jeez, Doyle. Way to kill me!" She slipped out of his grasp and faced Angel. "I guess it's my cue to get going." She reached out and hugged a surprised Angel.

><br>"Thank you," she whispered, so low that only he could hear.

><br>Then she let go and moved beside Doyle, snuggling close to him.

><br>"Well," the demon said, wrapping his arm around Cordy's shoulder. "Guess I better get going." He held out his hand and Angel took it, shaking it. "Thanks man," he said.

><br>"Your welcome," Angel replied. "Take care of her."

><br>Cordelia's eyebrows hit her hairline. "I'll be back tomorrow, y'know. Jeez, I'm not dying or anything." She rolled her eyes. "You demons have to get so dramatic at the sight of a little teensy incident. And I thought you were supposed to be the big macho ones."

><br>Angel and Doyle laughed. Then, with a salute, Doyle steered Cordelia away.  
><br>\*\*\*\*\*  
><br>When Wesley, Doyle and Cordelia had gone, Angel went back onto the roof. Looking out at the stars, he noticed that the dark cloud on the horizon had shifted, and the stars shone like diamonds.  
  
><br>And Angel knew that in Sunnydale everything was fine. That for another night, Buffy had beaten the demons and the vampires. That for another twenty-four hours the residents of the hell-stricken town could carry on, oblivious to the dangers that they faced.  
><br>But deep down, Angel knew that one day Buffy wouldn't be able to fight the demons of the night any longer. That her time would be up. Just like that.  
><br>One day...  
><br>  
>\*\*\*\*\*<br>THE END  
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